

The Dance of Relationships
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Change: The Law of the Low Doorway

If you are attempting to walk through a doorway which is only five feet high, you have to make a choice between two different methods. You may either bend down and not hit your head on the doorway when walking through it or you may hit your head on the doorway and then fall back. If you choose to hit your head and fall back you continue to face the dilemma of how you are going to get through the doorway. In approaching the doorway, the individual has the ability to choose which course to take. The individual has the creative power to successfully solve the problem. **“If I try the first method I not only bump my head on the lintel but have to fall back upon the second method after all. I call this the law of the low doorway. Nothing compels me to stoop, but if I do not realize the relation between my height and the aperture I cannot possibly pass through it. We stand in an equally definite relation to the critical personal problems of life. If we do not realize the fact and adapt our method accordingly we come into collision with reality.”** Adler, A. (1964). Problems of Neurosis. New York: Harper Torchbooks, Chapter 4, p. 55.

When individuals move towards a relationship, the concept of social belonging comes to the fore front. Life tasks of love, friendship, self significance, and work must be fulfilled for individuals to move successfully through life. This presentation will focus on how movement is essential in encouragement and cooperation in relationships.

Movement

“There is a difference between physical movements and movements of the human psyche. All the questions about free will hinge upon this important point. Nowadays it is believed that human will is not free. It is true that human will becomes bound as soon as it commits itself to a particular goal. And since circumstances in the cosmic, physical, and social relationships of humans frequently determine this goal, it is not surprising that our psychological life should so often appear to be ruled by immutable natural laws. But if a man, for example, denies his relationships to society and rebels against them, or if he refuses to adapt himself to the realities of life, then all these seemingly immutable laws are abrogated and a new law appears that is determined by the new goal. In the same way, the law of communal life does not bind an individual who has become perplexed by life and attempts to deny his feelings for his fellow human beings. And so I repeat once again that movement in our mental life can only take place when an appropriate goal has been chosen.” Adler, A. (1927). Understanding human nature. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett. p. 16.

Adler’s approach to therapy:

See with the eyes of the other
Hear with the ears of the other
Feel with the heart of the other

Adler: Social Instinct: Belonging, Connection, Community

It is important to find alternatives because symptoms are creative solutions that are not working.

GEMEINSHAFTSGEFUHL: This has been loosely translated as social interest. Gemein: Community of equals; Shafts: make, create, maintain; Gefühl: feeling, experience. The experience of making, creating, and maintaining a community of equals.

Adler stated that life happens at the level of movement and not words. He encouraged to only trust movement. Movement with a goal and with a direction are important as all psychic life involves this. This is important in creative power and will change the why into how. It makes each person a free individual. Adler, A. (1964). *Superiority and Social Interest: A Collection of Later Writings*. H. L. Ansbacher and R. R. Ansbacher (Eds.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Basic Principles of Human Nature

1. All behavior is purposive
2. Individuals are social beings with their main desire to belong
3. Individuals are whole beings who cannot be understood in part. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
4. Individuals are decision making organisms.
5. Individuals do not see reality as it is, but only as they perceive it, and their perceptions may be mistaken or biased.

Private Logic:

The meaning that is basis to the individual's valuation of self, others, and the world, and what is required in life. Private logic is the opposite of common sense since it is considered to be in common with a wider community. Common sense is associated with social interest.

“In a certain popular music hall, the “strong” man comes on and lifts an enormous weight with care and intense difficulty. Then, during the hearty applause of the audience, a child comes in and gives away the fraud by carrying the dummy weight off with one hand. There are plenty of neurotics who swindle us with such weights, and who are adepts at appearing overburdened. They could really dance with the load under which they stagger.” Adler, A. (1964). *Superiority and Social Interest: A Collection of Later Writings*. H. L. Ansbacher and R. R. Ansbacher (Eds.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. p. 91.

When discussing the following case studies, consider the following Adlerian principles in your approach.

1. The law of the low doorway
2. Movement as an Essential Function of Relationships
3. The Basic Principles of Human Nature
4. Adler's approach to therapy
5. Private logic
6. The Dance of Relationships